(a) whether his Ministry is aware of the fact that the air passengers are unhappy because of poor inflight service and food served in Air India including the take off and landing of private Airlines are much better; and

(b) whether Government is also planning to improve the inflight service, food including comfortable flying in Air India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Civil Aviation has not received complaints about landing and take-offs of Air India Flights.

Although, on board services of the airline are at par with full service international carriers, the few complaints received are forwarded for appropriate action. The process of improvement in all areas of aircraft airworthiness, cabin service, safety drills etc. is continuous and is regulated appropriately.

Job loss in aviation sector

718. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether employees of domestic airlines in the country are facing situation of loss of their jobs;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to protect the employees of airlines including those of private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Employees management is a human resource matter of airlines. Ministry does not regulate such matters. However, Government does not foresee any situation of major loss of jobs in airlines.

Shortage of pilots

719. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps being taken by Government to meet the acute shortage of trained pilots in the country; and

(b) whether it is a fact that due to crunch of pilots the aviation Industry will not be able to grow as per requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) In order to have sufficient quality pilots over longer period of time, the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRIA) is being modernised through upgradation of civil and electrical infrastructure and acquisition of additional trainer aircraft. IGRUA has also entered into a management contract with M/s. CAE, a reputed international organisation in this field, to professionalise its management. The Government has also decided to set up a world-class institute at Gondia in Maharashtra as Joint Venture Enterprise under the aegis of Airports Authority of India. The other flying clubs in the country

are also being supported by the Central Government by way of providing funds for acquisition of trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Aero Club of India.

(b) At present there is no general shortage of pilots. However, there is a shortage of aircraft type endorsed pilots, particularly in the Commander category, which are met by the airlines by engaging foreign pilots. Operators are required to train type rated Indian pilots for phasing out Foreign pilots.

Loss due to fog

†720.SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the flights were badly affected due to fog and mist this year;

(b) if so, the details of cancelled and delayed flights;

(c) the total loss of revenue to Government due to this;

(d) the steps taken by Government to solve the problems of the passengers; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government to tackle the problem of fog and to prevent the loss of revenue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During December, 2008 and January, 2009, 71 flights were cancelled, 752 flights were rescheduled and 145 flights were diverted due to fog.

(c) No such assessment is made.

(d) and (e) Pilots of various domestic Scheduled Airlines are trained for CAT-II/III operations during low visibility conditions as per the requirements laid down in Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) Section-7, Series 'X', Part-1. Although there is no mandatory requirement for Domestic Airlines to get their pilots trained to operate during low visibility conditions, these airlines are persuaded to train their pilots to operate in low visibility conditions. Only such pilots, who are CAT-II/III qualified, are approved as Instructor/Examiner so as to ensure, that more trained pilots are available for CAT-II/III operations during low visibility conditions to improve the operational efficiency. Further, flights schedules of Domestic Scheduled Operators to/from fog bound airports are approved on the basis of number of pilots trained by the operators for low visibility operations and the suitability of the planes for such operations.

Paucity of secondary airports

721. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has examined the recent study on Civil Aviation in India by an aerospace expert Hormoz P Mama, observing that India is not suitable for low cost airline model due to paucity of secondary airports;

(b) whether out of 127 airports under the operational control of Airports Authority of India (AAI) only 80 are operational;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.